



CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2019 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton

INTRODUCTION

I remember standing at the press as the *first* squeeze from our first lot of Chardonnay in 2019 began to trickle into the pan . . . and thinking WOW. Even at 6am and at that stage—cold juice scarcely 2 hours removed from the vine—it was clear that the potential for an effusive, rich, complex wine was there. The excitement lasted scarcely 10 seconds before it was time to get to work; time to envision, time to make (irreversible) decisions, and time to act. Seeing the potential, the mosaic in our minds, is one thing. Being naturally curious and receptive to new, creative ideas is another. But it's in the translation, the execution, and the eventual realization of what's finally in the glass that's the greatest challenge yet ultimately the most gratifying.

VINTAGE WEATHER

Plentiful winter rains coupled with cool temperatures pushed budbreak slightly behind normal. However, the vines took full advantage of the abundant soil moisture and responded with bountiful growth as the weather warmed into June. Mild summer days with temperatures dipping into the 50s at night made for ideal ripening conditions as harvest approached on time. A shot of heat in early September pushed the early blocks over the finish line, although cool temperatures mid-month drew the Chardonnay harvest out over 18 days.

NOSE

Bright gold in color and incredibly aromatic, the ripeness of the vintage is most pronounced initially; melon, perfume, and orange blossom slowly give way to fresh peach, honeysuckle and apricot. There's very little overt oak influence on the nose, although it comes across subtly in the background as pie crust and toast.

PALATE

It's the suppleness and silky mouthfeel that strike first, although there's abundant mango and citrus with Meyer lemon here as well. The minerality is chalky and distinct, a beautiful contrast that layers in with the acid adding both complexity and depth.

FINISH

There's slightly more wood on the transition to the finish, surfacing as baking spice and crème brûlée. However, they're handily overwhelmed by notes of Asian pear, mango and pineapple—absolutely delicious. In time, expect hazelnut and almond to appear.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

September 2–20

ALCOHOL

14.1%

BLEND

100% Chardonnay

BARREL AGING

10 months in French oak

BOTTLING DATE

July/August 2020

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton